

he's my guy

A series about
The Chelsea Men
by The
Chelsea Girls

By LEE HARRIS

FOOTBALL, the family and the shop are the three big things in Ron's life, and the order of priority depends on what day or time of day it is. Mind you, the family "pull" will be getting stronger at about the middle of October, when our second baby is due.

I'd like a girl, but Ron hopes it's another boy—a brother for Paul, who is two. He was born in May 1970, the day after Chelsea won the F.A. Cup, so that made a double celebration for us.

We're quite a family group where we live at Ewell, with Ron's Mum and Dad running the shop (sweets and toys) a good deal of the time and his grandmother living in the flat above, and my parents very near as well.

We've had the shop getting on for two years now, and when he's not training or travelling or playing Ron spends most of his time there . . . nearly every afternoon and Sunday mornings. He enjoys all the kids coming in and talking football with them.

He took the shop because, as he'd known nothing but football since he left school, he wanted to try his hand at something else. He says: "We can't all be managers when we stop playing"—not that he's near to that yet.

I was working for a music publisher when we met. Terry Venables was with Chelsea then, and as a bit of a music-man himself he often visited Tin Pan Alley. One day he brought Ron

into the office, and afterwards we went for a meal. I remember going home on the train to Romford that night I wasn't very well. Ron phoned the next day to find out if I was all right . . . and that was the start of us going out together.

The first game I saw was West Ham v. Chelsea. Now I rarely miss a home match, and young Paul also comes to The Bridge. The players he picks out besides his Dad are Ossie and Chris Garland—he got to know them this summer when our three families went on holiday together to Torremolinos for two weeks.

Ron had come back from the Barbados tour injured. They wanted to put his leg in plaster before we went on holiday, but

he said he would take care and not do anything silly, and it cleared up OK.

If he gets a bump in a game he never says anything. I only know he's injured when he comes home and starts bathing his leg in hot and cold water. And whatever the game—whether it's today's League match or a Cup Final—he's always in bed before ten o'clock the night before . . . sometimes by nine.

Ron's other main sports interests are golf and the dogs. His three racing greyhounds were doing well at Wimbledon early this year, but then two of them broke a leg and the other broke a toe. They are just coming back again now. Paul loves visiting them at the kennels and brushing them.

